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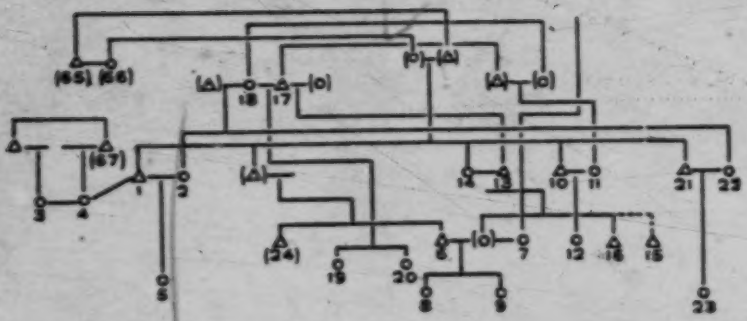

Fig. 11.
Genealogical composition of group a1.

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●115
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A1. --The chief of the group. He is a man of about 35 years, married to three women: a2, by whom he has a daughter a5, and a3 and a4, both daughters of "sister," without child.

A1 is remarkably intelligent, conscious of his responsibilities, active, enterprising and ingenious. When we went to visit his village, he did not hesitate to follow a new itinerary, unknown to him, because our horses could not pass along the habitual path. And when we arrived at the village, we found the stakes necessary to tie our oxen and horses, which he had had set up by a party sent a few hours ahead of time.

His attitude concerning writing is very revealing. He immediately understood his role of signing (1), and the social superiority which it

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1. The Nambikwara of group a are completely ignorant of drawing, if one excepts a few geometric tracings on gourds. For several days they did not know what to do with the paper and pencils which we distributed to them. A little later, we saw them deeply engrossed in tracing wavy lines. In doing this they were imitating the only use which they had seen us make of our note pads, that is, for writing, but without understanding the purpose and significance.

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Besides, they called the act of writing: iekariukediutu (a1), that is "make lines," which for them had an esthetic interest:

(3) Kihikagnere mũʔiene (b1).
It is nice to make lines.

[177]

The drawings reproduced in Figure 19 thus constitute a cultural innovation inspired by our own drawings.

622 confers; also [41] he asked us for a note pad and a pencil, and we
● 115 are likewise equipped when we travel together. He does not com-
157 municate to me verbally the information that I ask of him, but traces on his paper some wavy lines and presents them to me as though I should read his response. But he himself is half duped by his comedy. Each time that his hand finishes a line, he examines it anxiously, as if the significance should miraculously spring forth, and each time, the same chagrined disillusion is painted on his face. But he doesn't give in. And it is silently understood between us that his scrawl possesses a meaning which I pretend to understand. Naturally, the verbal commentary follows almost immediately, and excuses me from having to demand some very necessary clarifications. When we discuss command, we shall return to certain aspects of this semi-mystification.

He is a valuable informant who understands the problems, perceives the difficulties, and is interested in the work; but his functions absorb him often, and he disappears for whole days on a hunting expedition, a survey of itinerary or a localization of ripe seed or fruit trees. On the other hand, his wives often call him to tender love games in which he lets himself be voluntarily involved.

In a general way, his attitude shows a logic, a continuity of purpose, very exceptional among the Nambikwara who are often unstable and temperamental. Placed in other conditions and with other means at his disposal, he might be a valuable organizer. And he is, after all, alone responsible for the destinies of his group, which he conducts with competence, although in a sometimes utopian spirit.

The father and the mother of A1 are dead. But his father's brother and mother's sister, whom he calls ahuʔnosu and aʔkenosu live in the same village (A65 and a66).

115 a2. --About 30 to 35 years. The eldest of the wives of A1, mother of a5, daughter of a18 and a now dead father. She is serious industrious, a little reserved in social relations. In the triple household

In the triple household

115 of A1, she plays the role of the guardian of the home, and she is al-
[595] ways seen occupied in some culinary or craft job. She reveals
157 little voluntarily, but when she decides to do it, her information is clear and precise. It is always to her that one has recourse to settle knotty cases, to complete a vocabulary of kinship, to respond to a systematic interrogation.

115 a3. --Vigorous girl of some twenty years, secondary wife of A1.
157 Her mother (a63), arîndesu of A1, akenâhosu of a2, is at present married to an asukosu of A1. Her father, dead, was a brother of the father of a4.

She is exuberant, always good-humored, ready to go with her husband on the hardest expeditions, capable of carrying heavy loads. She is a true "force of nature"; physically, she is not without [42] charm, she is smiling and full of good health. As an informant she is vague, practically useless.

a4. --About 17 or 18 years of age, the youngest of the wives of A1. Her father and her mother (A67 and a68) are living, asoûhosu and a2 enosu of A1, ouensaesu and aseetasu of a2. She is pretty, coquettish and provocative, does not give herself over to any appreciable activity, except on a trip when she becomes the active collaborator of her husband. She talks voluntarily, laughs a great deal, is very curious about our clothing, utensils, manner of eating and living. Totally inefficient as an informant.

a5. --Eight to 9 years. Daughter of A1 and a2. She has a very
[142] marked sub-nasal prognathism, and has, on the left cheek, a sort of small pimply hole, without doubt due to a tropical ulcer. She is a very calm and amiable child, sensitive to our advances, but who, when she is annoyed, shows sudden fits of anger or outbursts of somber humor during which she is unapproachable. The rest of the time she loves our company and collaborates willingly on the ethnographic work.

A6. --About 30 years: he is the son of an older vanished brother of A1; he calls his paternal uncle "father," the wife a2 of the latter, "mother," and the little a5 "sister." From a first marriage with the daughter of his father's sister (a14), now dead, he has two children (a8 and a9). He is at present remarried (to a7). Otherwise he is vain, satisfied with himself, not very intelligent, a very good father and very taken with his young wife with whom he is always found tenderly embraced. He is a verbose informant, but dull and without personality.

115 a7. --A pretty woman of some twenty years, perhaps less; young
157 wife of A6. Her parents are living and reside, she says, in the village. She is asintu of A1 and a2, arindesu of a3 and a4, asecetasu of a5. She is stupid, egotistical, interested only in herself. She considers herself very seductive, which appears to be (from the Indian point of view, of course) very exaggerated. She systematically refuses to show the slightest interest in the two daughters of her husband, conducts herself very amorously as concerns him.

115 a8 and a9--About six and two years, daughters of the first mar-
855 riage of A6 and daughters of the deceased daughter of a14. The two
157 children are practically left to themselves. Their stepmother does not bother with them; their father takes care of them when his manly tasks and his wife permit him the time. Their grandmother is their
[603] chief aid and it is to her that they run when they hurt themselves, are hungry, thirsty or afraid. But she herself is absorbed by the cares of her sons, of her stepson (A14) and of her husband. And very often the baby is neglected for entire days, covered with ashes and filth, unless some woman of the group, seized by pity or simply [43] disgusted, takes her and gives her a bath. Most often it is her big sister, precociously mature, who takes care of her, carries her, even though she is scarcely any bigger, feeds her and cleans her up. Both are charming children, gay and hungry for caresses like those who are habitually deprived of them. Their lot is a great worry for the
[181] community. Under this regime of a hard life constantly absorbed by the small tasks, each one of which is hard work, one can with difficulty accept other cares than one's own. And these neglected children are a perpetual source of irritation, of which they are often the victims, even when taken care of. Many times we wondered if we should not take charge of the youngest of the children. They would have given her to us gladly. The baby was so cute that we would have been tempted if the perspective of seeing ourselves having a quarrel on the return trip with the Service for the Protection of the Indians had not, very reasonably, dissuaded us.

115 A10. --About 40 years. He is alonsu of A1, ajunkedisu of a2,
157 ahuinosu of a5, married to a11. His parents are dead. He is amiable and grinning, he suffers from a hernia which he hides under a piece of cloth hanging from his waist. His activity is considerably decreased. He is little interested in our work and not very eager to understand our questions and give us information.

a11. --About 40 years. Wife of A10. She is a "sister" of a2, a "wife" of A1, a "mother" of a5. She is dark, eager and industrious,

115 and only reveals her happy nature on occasions of songs and dances where
157 she excels. One always sees her occupied by some craft work which she seems to prefer—shaping or polishing disks of shells, drilling them through or filing them, rubbing earrings or bracelets. She talks little, letting herself be completely absorbed by her work. She is a wife and mother, and a remarkable informant for all details of the material culture.

a12. --Daughter of the preceding two, approximately 22 years; she is the wife of A73 who abandoned her to live with two women a74 and a75. Because of this, she returned to the charge of her parents, the more so because she is pregnant. She is placid, smiling and apathetic. She is separated from collective life by her condition
[164] and by a painful eye infection which struck her first among the members of her group of which several were later attacked by the epidemic.

A13. --About 40 years of age. Son of A18, "brother," consequently, of a2, "brother-in-law" of A1, whose older sister a14 he married. Always joyful, active and docile, he is the confidence man of A1, his preferred messenger, the companion he chooses for all complicated undertakings. He is industrious, a [44] not affected in his attitudes, and, as an informant, compliant, very verbose and not always clear or comprehensive.

a14. --About 40 to 45 years. Wife of the preceding, blood sister of A1, mother of A16. She is influential, active, diligent, at first quite rude, but in reality pleasing and competent. She exercises real authority over the other women of the group by her spirit of initiative and her pep. She is the grandmother of a8 and of a9 whom she feeds and whom she cares for frequently. Not only is she a good informant, but she sometimes takes didactic initiative. She loves songs and dances.

[608] A15. --About 15 years. He is an orphan; his father was the brother of A13 who took him in. A gentle, tranquil, rather timid boy.

A16. --7 or 8 years; son of A13 and of a14, "husband" of a5. He is a lively and curious child; his mother rarely refuses him anything, and he tyrannizes her willingly. She is very proud of him and overlooks many of his whims. One day she came to ask us to teach him to read. The attempts are not very encouraging. He looks upon the lessons as a game and refuses to learn the letters as determined forms; for him they are interchangeable, and he attributes to them in turn all the sounds which he has in his vocabulary.

115 A17. --Between 50 and 55 years, he is the dean of the group; he
157 is conscious of this and gets a certain pride from having around him
602 only "sons" or "daughters," "sons-in-law" and "daughters-in-law,"

115 157 602 grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He is physically robust, amiable, happy and talkative; very much inclined toward erotic jokes. He gives information willingly, with an extreme good will and a tireless volubility. But his explanations are not always clear, and it is necessary to let oneself be guided by his slightly incoherent fantasy.

115 157 a18.--About 45 years; wife of the preceding, mother of a2 and a22. She is a serious woman, industrious, devoted to her husband and children. She laughs little, talks to herself, and is always busy with some task. Her bits of information are rare, but solid.

a19.--About 10 years. Daughter of the two preceding. She is a very pretty girl, still a child who yet scarcely shows the first signs of puberty. She has in the group a position as "mother," as does her little sister a20. She is a brutal and sometimes violent child, who adopted towards us an attitude confined to hostility. Her language is crude and she gets involved willingly in the most daring pranks. This attitude is at least partially explained, as will be seen farther on, by her age situation.

[45] a20.--Little girl of 5 or 6 years, sister of the preceding: her contemporaries and even some adults call her "mother." She is perfectly insufferable; pretentious, affected, continually greedy for presents or distractions.

A21, a22, a23.--It is difficult to characterize these three individuals who lived, during nearly the whole time of our visit, in an almost absolute state of silent segregation. The baby a23 is not yet weaned, and the state of couvade was to end at the end of our stay. We shall describe later on the operations which sanction return to communal life. A21, 35 to 40 years, is the brother of A1; a22, about 18 years, the sister of a2. A21 was to die by drowning during one of our absences. The baby is 12 to 18 months old.

621 As we have said before, the restricted group such as it has just been described, is temporarily united with other similar bands, or is temporarily swelled by other family groups. Thus to the 6 "fires"(1)

602 1. As the following analysis shows, the family group—that is the restricted group—of the Nambikwara is rather difficult to define. The empiric notion of the hearth seems to us the most clear and practical. It defines the grouping of the individuals who come together in the evening and sleep around the same fire. In group a1 (restricted) studied previously, there are

621 We shall comment later (1) on the complex motives that might have induced

1. Cf. p. 77.

[197] these two bands, speaking different dialects and who were not even capable of understanding one another without an interpreter, to practically merge. It seems that group b1 was composed of the rare survivors of a formerly important formation now disappeared, living previously in two distinct groups, around the sources of the eastern tributaries of the Roosevelt River. We have already tried to calculate these losses, resulting from recent epidemics (2). Group c had,

2. Cf. above, p. 6.

without doubt, gone through the same hardships. Moreover, its [578] position had been compromised by antagonisms with other bands rising from the same dialect, and who had formerly been their allies. A visit, with a commercial goal, of related Indians originally from the south (members of the group known by the name of Kabisi) must have raised the forces of group b1 to 31 persons for 621 several days. Here is its composition at this moment:

● 115 157 622 601 Fire 1 (1 to 7). --The family of the chief of the band. The chief, B1, is 30 to 35 years old, and one of the most intelligent Indians whom it was our privilege to encounter. But he is intelligent in a way very different from A1. The latter is prudent and very resourceful, always meditating some political combination. On the contrary, B1 is not a man of action, but rather contemplative, with a charming and poetic spirit, and rich sensibilities. He is fully conscious of the inevitable decadence of his people, and this conviction often shades his words with a subtle tint of melancholy:

(4) joãmditnʔẽ, njãnajne heni niho ãmdednjẽn. (b1)

"I also did the same thing, now it is finished," [51] he says, remembering happier days when his group, far from being reduced to a handful of individuals incapable of keeping alive their traditional customs, was comprised of several hundreds of participants faithful to all the manifestations of the Nambikwara culture. His curiosity toward our customs and towards those which we had been able to observe in other tribes is just as great as ours. With him, ethnographic work is never unilateral. He conceives of it only as an exchange of information, and what we bring him is always very welcome. Often [77] he even asks us for—and preserves carefully—drawings representing

621 feather ornaments, hair styles, arms, such as we have seen among
115 neighboring or faraway peoples. Did he entertain the hope of per-
157 fecting the material and intellectual equipment of his group thanks
622 to this information? It is possible, even though his dreamy tempera-
177 ment hardly ever drives him to realizations. However, one day when
601 we were interrogating him concerning the Pan pipes, to verify the
area of diffusion of that instrument, he answered that he had never
[534] seen any, but that he would like to have a drawing (different from
group a, group b does not have real pipes of Pan, but instruments
made of two or three tubes of equal length and giving approximately
the same note, tied together with cotton thread and wax). With the
aid of our sketch he succeeded in making a crude but usable instru-
ment.

621 B1 had two wives: b2, about 25 years, mother of two little
601 girls of 5 to 7 years, b4 and b5; and b3, older than he (about 40
years old), mother of a boy of 7 years, B6, and of a girl of 9 years,
b7.

Fire 2 (8 and 9). --A son of a deceased brother of B1, whom the latter then calls "son" (about 25 years old), and his wife about 18, sister of B13; no information about the father and mother.

Fire 3 (10 to 12). --B10 is a brother of B8, and B1 calls him "son" also. His wife, b11, of undetermined parentage, is about 20 years old, and his daughter b12 about 6.

Fire 4 (13 and 14). --This household presents the only sure case of oblique marriage in group b1. B13, about 25 years, married a girl of 16 or 17, b14, daughter of a dead son of the dead brother of B1; he calls her then, as seen before, tasuite.

Fire 5 (15 to 17). --These three individuals are the last survivors of a related group destroyed by an epidemic. After the disaster, they joined the band of B1. B15, about 35 years, is the brother of b2, thus tarute of B1. His wife, the same age, b16, is a sister of B1, thus ndedere of b2. Their son, B17, is about 5. The daughters of B1 call him (B17) "husband," and he calls them "wives."

621 [52] The visitors. --They came from the region lying between
574 the sources of the tributaries of the left bank of the Juruena and of
601 those of the right bank of the Guaporé. All were related to their hosts, and were distributed among three generations. The oldest was comprised of three individuals: B18, about 50 years old, father of B21, B25, B27, and B29; his wife b19, the same age, paternal aunt of B1; and the brother of the wife, B20, 40 years. Besides the children of B18 already mentioned (from 20 to 30 years old), the next

264 The children partake of a meal immediately; the women eat later... whatever is left over, if there is a leftover. This, by the way, is the rule even among civilized Indians... But in general, if there is plenty, each helps himself to whatever there is, when he wishes and as he wishes; the food belongs to all.

262 [236] They skillfully remove the gall bladder from the liver of the animals they devour, but they do not have a special name for it.

[252] Aarú is a cake which the Cocozu prepare by pounding up a whole roasted armadillo in a mortar until its bones are completely mashed, and then mixing it with manioc dough in the form of beiju.

[825] An upland rat (Scapteromys gnambiquarae, Miranda Ribeiro), which the Paressi call cólori, is prized by the Nambicuara as a delicacy. They call it arantacú.

241 They gather and utilize the produce of their husbandry from day to day. They have no special harvesting time, and no stores or surpluses except for the tobacco which they keep between two sticks hanging from the ceiling thatch.

251 There is always manioc dough in the house; it is the Nambicuara bread, which they eat with all their other foods. They keep the dough in large baskets lined with pacova (1) leaves.

1. A kind of banana. (Ed.)

[237] Leftover honey is kept in the gourd; it does not reach fermentation because the desire [to drink it] soon revives in some Indian...

261 We did not see any rite connected with food; but the soldier [115] Gouveia, who was held prisoner in a Nambicuara village for six months in 1911, witnessed such a ceremony. The Indians of that village (which was named Urutau) had killed a large tapir. (1) This was [825]

1. Tapirus americanus, fairly abundant along the rivers of the area. Hard to catch because very wary.

[the pretext for] a feast. They dragged the animal to the village plaze. Then the men went off into the bush to gather branches with

261 which they covered themselves, squatting in a circle beneath the leaves and singing all the while. After a long time they rose, and with the branches still tied to their backs they started dancing around their catch, which was later carved.

115 Unhappily, Gouveia was of an amazing inadequacy. He had lived among them, a captive, for six months; he had actually married an Indian woman, who had tried her best to teach him the language of her forefathers. Yet in the end he fled, bringing back only the vaguest sort of information such as the above, which nevertheless I have deemed proper to record here.

276 Of the stimulants customarily used by primitive peoples, tobacco is the most important [among the Nambicuara] aside from those alcoholic beverages which have already been mentioned.

I have stated earlier that they dry the leaves between two pieces of wood which they stick into the house thatch; when they wish to smoke, they take a leaf and crumble it between their fingers, rolling up the dust in another leaf plucked from a tree which the Cocozu call enandzű.

[238] They also keep tobacco by reducing the leaves to dust which they store in special gourds.

[Fig. 28]

[177] Prior to the arrival of the Rondon Commission, the pipe was unknown among the people of the Serra do Norte. Even today they do not like it and prefer their cigarettes, which are small and quite unlike the huge rolls of some Amazon tribes. [Fig. 30]

Their tobacco (Nicotiana tabacum) is mild and pleasantly scented. On journeys they always carry gourds filled with tobacco dust, or sticks with tobacco leaves; if they feel like smoking somewhere along the way, they stop and form a circle. They proceed as if they were about to have a meal and kindle a small fire. When the cigarettes are finished they continue on their way.

They are extremely fond of our roll tobacco, especially when made into cigarettes with pieces of newspaper...

291 The Indians of the Serra do Norte go naked. Both men and
184 women wear a straw cord around the hips. The Cocozu wear bands of embira around the wrists and upper arms, below the knees and

115 We managed to obtain four different word lists: Cocozu,
124 Anunze, Tagnani and Tawite. The two lengthier ones--Anunze and Cocozu--were obtained with us much exactitude and certainty as possible (and, I believe, as much as necessary) thanks to Nuleke and Krikricêknerá. These two Indians had been devoted friends of Lt. [Plates p. 261.] Pyrineus de Souza since the days when he had managed the post at Campos Novos.

[Fig. 48]

Nuleke is so fond of Lt. Pyrineus that when we returned in 1912 he did not hesitate to cross the borders of his territory, leaving the land none of his people had abandoned in centuries, to follow the muleteers to Tapirapuã in search of his friend.

He was the first to place himself trustfully into Brazilian hands.

These two Indians lived at Campos Novos like adopted children of the household. At night they both slept under Pyrineus' hammock. They already spoke a few words of our language.

[Fig. 49]

The Indian Damasceno (Urinenoá), already mentioned above, was of great help with the Cocozu language. He was the most intelligent boy we could find. One Tagnani shared this honor, and we were sorry to part with him. He understood the slightest gesture, and carried out to perfection our every request. It was he who consented to simulate an arrow attack which I asked for by means of signs and which is now recorded on a film belonging to the [National] Museum and shown at the National Library in 1913.

[262] Each word on the lists was verified more than once in the presence of the object or phenomenon it describes.

We were more interested in the quality than in the quantity of words.

This does not mean that we believe no corrections are possible; it is sufficient to compare two lexicons compiled by capable persons among the same Indians, on separate occasions, to see how differently certain terms may be rendered.

194 The Nambicuara language contains the following vowels: a, ê, i, ô, o, u, ü, with the same values as they would have in Portuguese; the sound of ü is intermediate between German ü and French eu.

/212 cont./

278 184 southern boundary of the territory of these Indians toward the Amazon. Among the most remote Ñambikwara, those on the right bank of the Rio Juruena whose material culture is extremely poor and who do not have a sorcerer, all the men know how to prepare curare. Among the Tagnani living in the region of Campos Novos and the Rio October 12 and the Çabanè living between the campos of Vilhena and the Rio Commémoration, the preparation of curare is reserved either for the chief or more often for the sorcerer (Çabanè). The Tamandé of the Roosevelt River have refused to give any precise information on curare, the preparation of which is the exclusive prerogative of the sorcerer; their arrow poison, which I was able to study, is identical to that of the other groups. The Ñambikwara of the Cabixi River also use curare, but I did not obtain /213/ any details about its preparation from these Indians, who visited our camp but spent only one evening there.

278 126 I was present at the preparation of curare for the first time among the Ñambikwara of the right bank of the Rio Juruena.

[114] Among the objects gathered for our collections were several poisoned arrows. The first experiments carried out on various animals either with the arrows or with the wash-water of the points revealed a symptomatology recalling that of curare.

[116] [117] Our two chief informants, who were called José Maria and Julio by the civilized people, were influential personages in the group and the principal authors of the massacre of the North American, Protestant mission of the Juruena in 1930.

[123] Patient negotiations led them to show me the plant used by them, and then a little later, to let me be present at the preparation of the poison itself.

Not without fear of being hoaxed, I tested the prepared product: its action was identical in every respect to that of the arrow poisons. The Ñambikwara had been honest.

[114] [62] Two months later in the campos of Vilhena the Çabanè sorcerer, who belonged to the mixed group composed of the

[492]
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Plate III



A



B



C



D

(See captions on next page.)

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8:Vellard--15 D.E-5 (1939) 1939 SP17 Nambicuara SP17

8:Vellard--15a D.E-5 (1938) 1939 SP17 Nambicuara SP17

Plate III

278 Preparation of curare by the Nhambikwara Indians
(right bank of the Juruena)

A. Stalk of Strychnos sp., the root of which is used to prepare curare.

[115] B. The Nhambikwara Julio digging up a root of iriwa (Strychnos sp.)

C. The Nhambikwara Julio carries back some roots of Strychnos sp.

D. Root of Strychnos sp.